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SUBJECT: FORMER URUZGAN GOVERNOR JMK ACTIVELY LOBBIES FOR
OLD JOB

REF: KABUL 2641

Classified By: DCM Christopher Dell for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a September 14 meeting, former Uruzgan Governor and Populazai leader Jan Mohammad Khan (JMK) provided a harsh critique of Governor Hamdam,s tenure. JMK made clear that in his current role as Tribal Affairs Advisor to Karzai he remains deeply involved in Uruzgan politics. JMK, who enjoys a close relationship with the president, openly acknowledged his interest in returning to Uruzgan as governor. However, he insisted that he was not to blame for Hamdam,s poor performance. JMK cited Hamdam,s weak standing in the province and his &deep involvement8 in corruption as the most troubling developments. JMK offered Hamdam several suggestions to turn his governorship around, but questioned whether Hamdam was up to the challenge. The well-connected former governor is clearly jockeying for his old position, but to prevent this scenario, Hamdam should follow his chief adversary,s advice.
End Summary.

&Hamdam Is Nothing But Bad News8

¶2. (C) On September 14, former Uruzgan governor (2002-2006) and Populazi leader Jan Mohammad Khan described himself as a bridge between Karzai and the province, since his relationship with the president is &strong.8 On September 10, IDLG Director Popal told PRTOff that Karzai and Popal have been very close friends with JMK for years) &JMK has 100 percent backing from Karzai!8 JMK explained to PRTOff that in his current position as Tribal Affairs Advisor to President Karzai he spends up to two months in Uruzgan per year convening shuras with local tribal leaders and informally meeting with provincial and district officials. He also regularly receives visitors from Uruzgan in Kabul. In weekly meetings with Karzai, JMK said he is &forced to convey the serious concerns8 of Uruzgan tribal leaders and private citizens concerning Hamdam. (Note: On September 15, IDLG Deputy Barna Karimi told PRTOff that JMK would not be returning to the governorship in Uruzgan.)

¶3. (C) While insisting that he does not interfere in Governor Hamdam,s administration, JMK leveled harsh criticisms against Hamdam (reftel), underscoring his

ineffectiveness and &deep involvement8 in corruption. JMK cited Hamdam,s numerous trips outside of Uruzgan, his reluctance to address the growing presence of Taliban in the provincial capital of Tarin Kowt, and his &practice8 of withholding budgets of line ministries and splitting salaries and sustainment funds of certain line ministries with a few complicit ministry directors. JMK repeatedly referred to an alleged arrangement between Hamdam and Director of Education Rahmatullah dividing among themselves the sustainment money allotted to teachers. When asked for evidence, JMK admitted that his information came mainly from disgruntled ministry directors, tribal leaders, and teachers, but he insisted that the Hamdam,s weak grasp on security and corrupt dealings &were not up for debate.8

If I Were Governor Again...

14. (C) In sharp contrast to Hamdam,s record, JMK claimed that he had maintained a high level of security and a productive relationship with his ministry directors during his administration. As the former mujahaddin leader in Uruzgan, JMK said that his priority as governor had been the elimination of safe havens for Taliban and he was personally involved in joint operations with Coalition Forces. When asked about his reputation for marginalizing Ghilzai tribes in favor of Populzai and Barakzai tribal interests, JMK pointed out that his provincial cabinet had included leaders from all tribes, including the Ghilzai. He asserted that, &nobody could deny8 that the Ghilzai produced the greatest number of Taliban activists or sympathizers, and thus they were the &obvious8 target of his counterinsurgent

operations and land confiscations.

15. (C) JMK added that Hamdam must address the concerns of ministry directors, claiming that his success as a governor derived from his close contact with the people and the ministry directors. Specifically, Hamdam must cease from abusing his authority over the budgets of line ministries. JMK said he understood Hamdam,s argument that control of the purse was his only leverage over &insubordinate8 ministry directors who viewed Hamdam as an outsider (Hamdam is from Wardak Province), but a more effective approach would be strengthening the oversight of expenditures and activities of line ministries. Most importantly, according to JMK, Hamdam must stop demanding money from minister directors. JMK asserted that the ministry directors would eventually &get over8 Hamdam,s lack of tribal ties to the province, curb their own corrupt tendencies, and throw their weight behind the governor, but only after Hamdam significantly raised his level of performance as a leader and administrator of public funds. It appears that Hamdam,s oft-repeated fears that JMK is deliberately trying to undermine him are justified. JMK,s reform message rings hollow, given his undeniable involvement in corruption while serving as governor.

...I Could Do It Better

16. (C) Despite his suggestions for improvement, JMK expressed little confidence in Hamdam,s capacity to turn his governorship around) &he just does not want it badly enough.8 JMK stated in unambiguous terms that if asked by Karzai, he would gladly return to Uruzgan as governor. He stressed that he never wanted to leave in the first place. (Note: The Dutch conditioned their command of the PRT in Uruzgan on JMK,s removal, citing his track record for exacerbating tribal tensions and likely involvement in drug trafficking.)

Another Chance for JMK?

17. (C) JMK,s critical assessment of Hamdam,s performance is consistent with what we hear from non-JMK supporters in the province. For example, on September 15, MP Sona Nelofar confirmed that 100 leading tribal elders from all tribes in

the province gathered in Kabul in early September to meet with Uruzgan MPs about Hamdam,s dismissal. They were all in favor of JMK,s return as governor, and were seeking a meeting with Karzai. In order to keep JMK at bay, Hamdam must take immediate steps to overcome his image among many ministry directors and tribal leaders as a weak, isolated, and corrupt governor.

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